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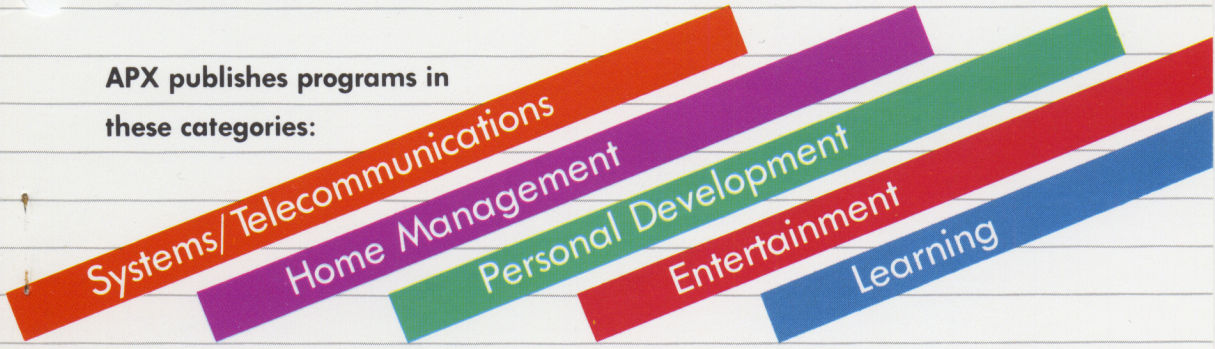

WORDGO

LEARNING

Build word skills by blending letter combinations on a game board
(ages 8 and up)

by Greg L. Thrush and Marian Dillashaw

Requires: ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge
One ATARI Joystick Controller
Diskette version (1): (APX–20212)
ATARI 810 Disk Drive
40K RAM

Edition A

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Introduction

OVERVIEW

WORDGO is an educational game that requires quick thinking and develops reading and vocabulary skills. You learn to combine blends and digraphs at the beginning of words with phonograms at the ends to form whole words, a basic phonetic skill.

When you choose one of two difficulty levels, a grid of sixteen boxes containing word endings (such as "ank" or "ick") displays below one blend of initial consonants (such as "th"). Using your joystick controller, you position the cursor over one of the endings ("ank", for example) to form a word with the initial consonants above. If your choice forms a word ("thank"), that box is outlined, and you try again with a new word beginning. When you outline four boxes in a line (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally), you're rewarded. The more words you make, and the faster you work, the more points you score. You can compete against your own high score in a one-player game, or against your opponent's high score in a two-player game. You can multiply your score with double and triple intersecting lines.

If you try to create words you're not sure of, you might surprise yourself by making a word that really exists. If you do, you can request a definition of the word you've made. This feature, with no penalty for errors, encourages you to expand your vocabulary. WORDGO also teaches correct spelling of words that sound the same. The program accepts "scamp" but not "skamp".

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge
One ATARI Joystick Controller per player

40K RAM
ATARI 810 Disk Drive

CONTACTING THE AUTHORS

Users wishing to contact the authors about WORDGO may write or call them at:

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303/651-3936

Getting started

LOADING WORDGO INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Insert the ATARI BASIC Language Cartridge in the left cartridge slot of your computer.

2. Plug your joystick controller into the first controller jack of your computer console. If you're planning to play the two-player version, plug the second joystick controller into the second controller jack.

3. Have your computer turned OFF.

4. Turn on your disk drive.

5. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the WORDGO diskette with the label in the lower right-hand corner nearest to you. Close the door.

6. Turn on your computer and your TV set. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

THE FIRST DISPLAY SCREEN

The first screen displays the program title and the copyright. Then the authors' names appear.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

The following screen displays to help you select the difficulty level and the number of players.

OPTION FOR ABILITY
STRATEGIST

SELECT NUMBER OF
PLAYERS
1

PRESS START
TO CONTINUE

Figure 1 Selection screen display

First decide on the skill level: "greenhorn" or "strategist". At the strategist level, you can move the cursor about the screen faster. Press the OPTION key to change the skill level until you've decided on your choice.

Press the SELECT key to choose a one- or two-player game.

When your choices display on the screen, press the START key to begin play.

Playing WORDGO

SAMPLE DISPLAY SCREEN

A screen similar to the following displays when you press the START key:

```
                -SL-
TIME                          HI SC
 4                              986
SEC                    SCORE 1438
-----------------------------------
ICK       ISM        AW        AND
-----------------------------------
USH       ONE        AD        IST
-----------------------------------
OMP       ANE       ANK         EW
-----------------------------------
ICK        OP       OOL        ALL
-----------------------------------
```

Figure 2 Sample display screen

In the upper left corner, the time displays as it ticks audibly down from 30 seconds to zero. At the top right corner, the high score (986) displays above the current score (1438). A word beginning ("SL") appears above the grid of sixteen word endings. A cursor surrounds the ending in the upper left corner ("ICK").

If you've chosen a two-player game, the screen includes the following instructions:

PRESS FIRE TO BEGIN

The first player begins by pressing the red joystick button.

ACTION

Hold the joystick with the red button in the upper left corner. Move the cursor up by moving the joystick away from you (towards the TV screen), down by moving the joystick toward you, or right or left. If the cursor is at the bottom of the screen, move it downward to place it at the top of the screen; if it's at the top, move it up to place it at the bottom of the screen. In the same way, if it's at the leftmost edge of the screen, move it to the left to place it in the right box, and so on.

The cursor frames a word ending to complete a word. Press the red joystick button when you've made a word. If your choice is correct, the word you've formed blinks at the top of the screen.

Hold down the red joystick button to can see a definition of the word.

If your choice is incorrect, you hear a beep and try another choice.

If you think no word can be formed with any of the endings in the grid, press the SELECT key. The program checks to see if you're right. If you are, your score increases and a new word beginning appears. If you were wrong, and there's a possible word out there that you didn't identify, your score decreases and the same blend remains on the screen. Try again until your 30 seconds are up.

If you're using the two-player game, the following prompt displays after one player finishes his turn:

PRESS FIRE FOR NEXT PLAYER

When the second player presses the red joystick button, a new grid appears. The two players alternate turns with the same grids they started on.

Play ends when "WORDGO" displays at the top of the screen. This happens if four word endings are outlined in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally). If the last word you form completes two intersecting strings (diagonally and vertically, for example), you have a double "WORDGO".

After a "WORDGO" is completed in at least one direction, the following prompt displays at the top of the screen:

PRESS FIRE FOR NEW GAME

Your final score displays in the upper right corner below your high score.

In the two-player game, each player's current score displays below the high score when it's his turn. Both players aim to exceed the same high score.

Note. WORDGO doesn't recognize people's names unless they're commonly used as words. For example, the program rejects

"Stan" but accepts "Chuck".

RESTARTING THE GAME

Press the red joystick button to start another game with the same number of players and ability level as the last game.

Press the OPTION key at any time during the game to return to the selection display screen (Figure 1). Then you can choose another difficulty level or number of players. Press the START key to begin play.

SCORING

The object of the game is to outline four boxes in a line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The name "WORDGO" appears on the screen, and your score is doubled. If you get a double "WORDGO", by completing two intersecting lines (horizontally and diagonally, for example), your score is quadrupled. For the rare triple "WORDGO", your score is doubled <u>again</u>.

If time runs out before you form an acceptable word, your score decreases ten per cent. Pressing the SELECT key when a word can be formed decreases your score twenty per cent. (If your guess was right, and a word can't be formed, your score increases by the number of seconds remaining when you pressed the SELECT key.)

In a two-player game, the score of the first one to make "WORDGO" is doubled, and play ends for that game.

HELPFUL HINTS

Speed and strategy can improve your score! Sometimes more than one word can be formed with the beginnings and endings on the screen. (For example, you might have a choice between "slap" and "slick".) If you choose carefully, you increase your chances to win a quadrupled score or to defeat your opponent.

In the one-player game, your score increases when you form as many words as possible before you get a "WORDGO". You have a better chance for a quadrupled score.

Educational objectives

The main objective of WORDGO is to reinforce phonetic skills, for either beginners or remedial students. It offers them a chance to have fun while they're working with words.

WORDGO helps students to recognize quickly the words that can be formed with familiar blends, digraphs, and phonograms. The game is easier to play when the student knows pronunciations of blends more thoroughly.

WORDGO sharpens the players' spelling skills. They learn to recognize the correct spelling of blends that sound the same (for example, "scamp" and "skamp").

The use of uncommon words and seldom used definitions of common words helps a student increase his vocabulary. Reading definitions of unfamiliar words gives him more words to choose from in future games. (Note that the definitions in the diskette version are short; players must consult the dictionary for more complete or varied definitions.)

Quick reference sheet

OPTION KEY	Selects ability level; Returns to selection screen at any time
SELECT KEY	Selects number of players; Checks for possible word combinations
START KEY	Starts game play
RED JOYSTICK BUTTON	Registers choice of ending to form word; Begins play (two-player game); Restarts game without returning to selection screen; Shows definitions

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1. Name and APX number of program.

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

3. What do you especially like about this program?

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate or comprehensive?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program:

   _____ Easy to use
   _____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
   _____ Enjoyable
   _____ Self-instructive
   _____ Use (non-game programs)
   _____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please [illegible] page numbers).

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

11. Other comments about the program or user instructions:

From

STAMP

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[seal here]